



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

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Comments for Wilderness Stewardship Plan for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Available for Public Review

The public is welcome to review the nearly 900 comment letters received about the development of the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks' Wilderness Stewardship Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (WSP/EIS). The public comment/scoping period, held from April 11 to August 31, 2011, included five public meetings held in northern, central, and southern California.

All comment letters are available for the public to read as one large "pdf" file on the National Park Service's Planning, Environment and Public Comment website: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sekiwild> (then click on "Document List"). The document is searchable by word or phrase. Personal identifying information of unaffiliated individuals has been excluded from comment letters; the names of persons representing interest groups, agencies, and businesses are included. All comment letters were entered as received, and they have not been edited or changed in any way. However, we cannot verify that comments received are factually accurate, as they are often the opinion of commenters.

If you need help finding your individual comment letter in the document or if you would like a CD version of the document, please contact the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Environmental Compliance Office: 559-565-3102. Currently, park management is studying the comments to determine the scope and the significant issues to be analyzed in greater detail in the Wilderness Stewardship Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

"This tremendous response demonstrates the public's care and passion about protecting our nation's special wild places, specifically the 830,000 acres of lands managed as wilderness in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks," stated Superintendent Karen Taylor-Goodrich.

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Comments were received on an extremely wide variety of wilderness topics and issues and expressed a variety of opinions. While the majority of commenters were California residents (83%), the park received comments from 41 other states and 3 other countries.

Numerous commenters were concerned about issues that have been under discussion for years while others brought forward new wilderness management considerations and ideas, including requesting increased restrictions on types of equipment that can be brought into wilderness. Additional comments included:

- Opinions on how wilderness should be experienced, recommending “appropriate” and “inappropriate” activities, equipment, and material items, including:
 - campfires
 - group sizes
 - food-storage lockers and portable bear-resistant food storage canisters
 - camp equipment (e.g. chairs and ice chests)
 - electronic devices (e.g. GPS units and cell phones)
 - trails and bridges
 - administrative use of helicopters;
- Support for or concern about stock use in wilderness;
- Support for or suggested changes in current management practices (e.g. regulations, permitting, quotas);
- Support for or suggested changes in the conduct of commercial services (e.g. hiking, climbing, and stock trips provided by private guides and outfitters), specifically as it relates to the “extent necessary” clause of the Wilderness Act;
- Views on what wilderness means to commenters;
- Suggestions to afford more protection to the natural environment.

Please note: The process of commenting and providing input is not a voting process. The National Park Service will take all perspectives into consideration, however, management decisions will be based upon the mandates of relevant legislation and scientific integrity.

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The tentative upcoming schedule for the WSP/EIS is as follows:

- **Fall 2011 - Spring 2012** – Analyze Public Scoping Comments
- **Spring - Summer 2012** – Alternatives Development
- **Fall 2012** – Release Draft Alternatives for Public Review
- **Winter 2012 - Fall 2013** – Prepare Draft WSP/EIS
- **Fall 2013 - Winter 2014** – Public Review of Draft WSP/EIS
- **Summer 2014** – Release of the Final WSP/EIS
- **Fall 2014** – Record of Decision by Pacific West Regional Director

All commenters who supplied either e-mail or physical mailing addresses have been included on the parks' mailing list for this project. Anyone who wishes to be included on the mailing list for this project should supply their name and either an e-mail or physical mailing address to: SEKI_Planning@nps.gov. Please include the following on the subject line: *WSP Mailing List*.

-NPS-

Background Information:

From: The Wilderness Act, Public Law 88-577, passed September 3, 1964...

Congressionally Designated Wilderness is to be:

- lands “. . . designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition. . .”
- lands “. . . administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character. . .”
- land “. . . where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man.” And to be land that retains its “. . . primeval character and influence . . . which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions . . .”

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- land that appears “. . . affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man substantially unnoticeable. . .” and “. . . has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. . .”
- land that “may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational , scenic, or historical value.” And is “. . . devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use.”

Designations/Acreages

Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness:

- Designated by 1984 California Wilderness Act = 723,036 acres
- Designated by 2009 Omnibus Public Land Management Act = 45,186* acres

John Krebs Wilderness (2009 Omnibus Public Land Management Act) = 39,740* acres

Total designated wilderness acres *(93.3% of park lands) = 807,962 acres

Proposed Wilderness – managed as wilderness per NPS policies = ~30,000 acres

Total designated or managed as wilderness (96.8% of park lands) = ~837,962 acres

*(Note: * denotes preliminary number of acres which may be slightly altered upon establishment of final wilderness boundaries)*

For Further Reference on National Park and Wilderness Legislation and Policies, See:

- Act establishing Sequoia National Park, September 25, 1890 (and following acts)
- Act establishing Kings Canyon National Park, March 4, 1940 (and following acts)
- The National Park Service “Organic” Act, August 25, 1916
- The Wilderness Act, Public Law 88-577, September 3, 1964
- The California Wilderness Act, Public Law 98-425, Sept. 28, 1984
- The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, Public Law 111-11, March 30, 2009
- National Park Service, Management Policies, 2006 – Chapter 6, Wilderness Preservation and Management

These documents are posted at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sekiwild> then click on “Document List.”